



Banam

*One of the ancient musical
instruments of the
Santals*

Catalogue
The Banam Making
Workshop
at Bishnubati,
September to November 2018

by Dr. Boro Baski

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One of the ancient musical instruments of the Santals

by Boro Baski

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BANAM

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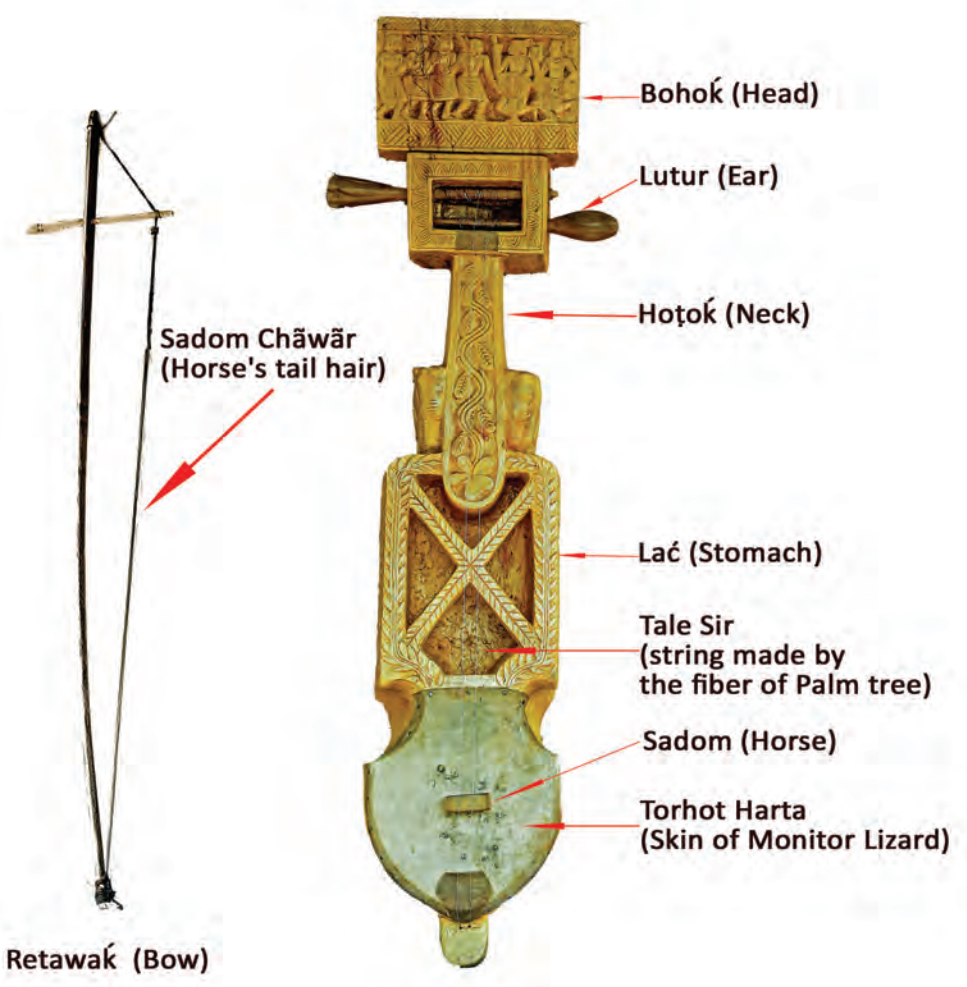
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The Parts of the Banam

Contents



About Banams	7
The Banam making workshop	11
The Banam makers	14
The Banam and I : My Story	
Barka Tudu	17
Borhan Hansda	19
Budi Baski	23
Sanjoy Mardi	27
Shyamsunder Mandi	31
Probhat Bagdi	33
Sahadeb Kisku	37
Saheb Ram Tudu	39
Sokol Soren	43
Bimol Baskey	45
Sanyasi Lohar	47
Som Murmu	51
Sonatan Murmu	55
Satya Hembrom	57
Acknowledgments	59



About Banams

Banam, a single-string wooden lute or fiddle, is one of the ancient musical instruments of the Santal tribe. The instrument is made of wood; the lower part is covered with the hide of the Bengal monitor lizard and tightened with bamboo pegs. According to its different shapes, sizes and types, the Banam has different names and creates various tunes. Banam-Making is an art, and not many people among the Santals are still engaged in it.

There are various stories on the origin of the Banam which are mostly related to *Bongas* (spirits). One such – highly symbolic – story about the Banam runs like this: A long time ago, there lived a family with five brothers and one sister. The brothers used to hunt in the forest for a living, and the sister grew vegetables and collected firewood. One day when the sister was cutting vegetables, she hurt her finger and a drop of blood fell on the vegetables. Her elder brother saw this. On that day, the vegetable curry tasted very good. The elder brother told his other siblings about the incident, and they wondered if her one drop of blood had made the curry so delicious. If so, how much more delicious her flesh would be! So one day the brothers killed their sister and cooked her flesh. Everybody got their share of flesh and ate it, except the youngest one. He was very fond of his sister and he became very sad about the killing of their sister and the incident which followed. So he buried his share of flesh in the backyard of their house. Over the years, a *Guloj* tree with many flowers grew up in the place where the flesh had been buried.



One day, while walking past the tree a “*Koimar Jugi*” (member of a clan who walk around the villages begging and singing) got attracted to the tree. He cut it and made a Banam from it and begged while playing the Banam. One day the Jugi got to know the five brothers who were



married by then and lived separately. As the Jugi played the Banam, the brothers were shocked and puzzled at its melody. The sound resembled their sister's plaintive voice. They bought the Banam from the Jugi, but none of the brothers could keep the Banam with him at night because from the Banam emanated the sound of their sister's cry. But when the Banam was handed over to the youngest brother, it stayed calm, and since then the Banam stayed with him. This is believed to be the first Banam of the Santals. This story must be understood on a highly symbolic level. The eating of human flesh here is symbolic of how deeply the musical instrument 'becomes' the essence, the soul of the human being who 'possesses' the Banam –or who is 'possessed' by the Banam.

Traditionally, the Banams have human faces, faces or masks of animals, birds and sometimes of the abstract figures of *Bongas* which are carved on them. Nowadays, figures of contemporary stories are also being depicted. Banams mostly accompany the songs that are related to the spirits and ancestors, like the songs in the Dāsāe Porob (Dasai Festival) or the Bhandan (Death Rites). Thus the Banam is not only a musical instrument that makes music and gives joy, but it also has a great role in creating the ambience to connect human souls with their ancestors and spirits. The songs that go with it the Banam help us to understand the deeper meaning of the spiritual and religious life of the Santal community.

Banam do Santalkoak mare utar bajna sapapko modre mit' ten kana. Noa do kath reakko benaoa ar cetan khon latar mit' ten tale sirko taniakakaka. Noa do cetan nakha do nanha ar jeliinge tahena ar latar nakha do thubage ar bati leka khayukge tahena, oka cetanre hartateko dapkaka. Tale sir retae lagit sadom cawar reak ak leka tahena. Banam do nana hunar lekanak tahena ar ona reak sade ar nutum ho juda

judage tahena. Banam benao do Santalkoak adi naprak karigoli kana. Menkhan, nebetar Santalko do banam benaoko hiriñ idiyeda.

Banam sirjauen renak do aema kisa menaka, ar sanam kisa reak jonaage Bonigako saote menaka. Onkanakge mit' ten kisa do nonka menaka - Kathae sedae jokhan mit' ten gharonjre morē goṭen boeha koṛa ar onkoren eskar miseraye tahēkana. Boeha koṛa do sikar senrdrako calaka ar misera doe isin-basana ar orak reakē kami baraea. Mit' din misera do arake gegetkan tahēkana ar aeak katupe get' ena. Mit' thop mayam do arakre joroyena. Maran koṛa do noaye neltiok keda. Un din utu do adi sebel atkarena. Maran koṛa do ghotna babot boeha korakoe laiat' koa. Boehako hudis keda - judi mit' thop mayamte arak utu unak sebelena tobe nuiak jel do tinak sebela. Boehako do akoren miserako goṭ keda ar uniak jelko utu keda arko hatinjoana. Sanam horoko jom keda, menkhan katit utaric do bae jomleda. Uni do akkoren misera adiyē dulaṛede tahēkana ar uniko goṭkedete adi ate bhabnayena ar aeak his reak jel do orak kudam bargerey topa kada. Aema bochor bad ona jaegare do mit' ten Gulanj baha harayena.

Mit' din, mit' ten Koemar Jugi onkatey paromokkan tahēkana. Uni do lahkakkan ona Gulanj dare nelte ontegey or calaoena. Uni do ona dareye makkeda ar onate mit' ten baname benao keda ar ona banam banamte ato ato kokoye darana. Mit' din do uni Jugi koe koete onko boeha thene seterena. Netar do onko boeha do baplakateko begarakan tahēkana. Jugiak banam anjomte sanam boehako asbasaoena, ente ona banam do onkoren miserawak dukhali aran leka sadekkan tahēkana. Onko do uni Jugi then khon ona banamko kereñ keda. Menkhan ona banam do okoe ho bako doho dareada, ente ninda ona banam khon akoren miserawak rak leka aran ko anjomet' tahēkana. Ona banam katit utaric boeha dohoe lagit' ko emaode khan do thirena, unkhon ona banam do uni thenge tahēyena. Kathae, onage Santalkoak pahil utar banam do.

Adi bhentawanak noa kisa hotete noage bujhauokkana je banamre do manmi jivi menaka, ona iate banamre do manmi hirdan, homor ar hulās sanamak menaka.



Ad col lekate banam cetanre do manmi mutan, cẽẽ-cipruť, jan janwarkoak mutan ar oka oka do Boŋakoak mutan hõko benao rakaba. Menkhan netar do nebetar reak kisa gohon reak cal hõ nelogok kana. Boŋa ar hapramko niye sereñ duranre banam reak col nel namokkana. Dāsāe ar Bhandan jokhan hõ banamko banama. Noŋkate nelogokkana je banam do eken raskā hulās laḡit do baŋko banama, bickom noa hotete Hapram ar Boŋako hõko disakoa. Banam sāote sereñ hotete Santal somaj reak boŋa-buru ar jion dorson babotte hõ baḍae namokkana.



Presenting the Banams to the public

The Banam Making Workshop

Banam plays an important role in the Santal cultural heritage. However, the making and use of the Banam is declining among Santals and is threatened by extinction. The old villagers who have imbibed our traditional knowledge and normally make and play the Banams are unable to transmit their skills and knowledge to the young generations. The young mostly remain busy preparing school lessons and therefore get little time to sit with the elderly people of their village and learn from them. Another reason is the young generations' attraction to the fast and loud music from Bollywood and from other modern sources.

Against this background, the *Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adibasi Trust* organized a Workshop on Banam Making in the campus of the *Museum of Santal Culture* at Bishnubati. Traditional Banam makers and the young generation of Santals who have an inclination towards Banam making have been invited to make Banams during a three-month workshop (September to November 2018). In the last phase of the workshop the Banam makers have given final touches to their instruments, like covering them with cow-hide and reptile-skin and arranging the strings in their respective homes. The main objective of the Banam Workshop was to preserve and to transmit the traditional art and the knowledge of Banam making and to create awareness of the importance of this art that incorporates such rich stories and histories about our lives. We illustrate this booklet with pictures of the Banams that have been produced during the workshop. Further, the Banam makers have shared their personal journeys with their own Banams.





Some moments of the Banam making workshop
Photos by: Boro Baski



Banam Benao Kāmisal

Santalkoak āri-čali ar leg-legcar rākhi-jogaore Banam reak ādi mōhot menaka. Menkhan, Santalko talare banam benao ar bajao reak kārigholi dō ať idikkana. Atoren mare harāmkō, okoe dō nit dhābić noa kārigholiko rākhi jogao āguakat dō akoak hunar nahak jugren gidra ar juānko then bako pasnao dāreakkana. Gidra dō olōk parhao iate atoren harāmkō sō ādi somoe dō bako khemao dāreakkante noa hunar bānko ceť dāreakkana. Ar dosarak karōn dō kana je nahak jugren kōra kūrī dō sinema renak dhum dharaka sereñ ar bajnako kusiakkana.

Noako hudis bundiskatege Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adibasi Trust dō ‘Museum of Santal Culture’, Bishnubati atore banam benao kāmīsal reakē portōn akada. September khōn November, 2018, pē cando reak kāmīsalre (workshop) maren banam kārighol sāote nahak jugren kārigholko hōko nēotalet koa. Mučat re banam kārigholko dō ako akoak orak idikate torhot se gai hartate banamko dāpkeda ar ona reak tale sir taniyaukate tiyunko milau keda. Noa banam kāmīsal reak jos motlob dō tahēkana jemōn ať dokkan noa mōhotanak kārigholi hōrko then pasnao dāreak ar ona hotete aboak nagam reak kisako rākhi jogao dōho dāreak. Noa huđiñ puthire ale dō noa kāmīsalre benoakan banam reak citarkole chapa sōdoreda. Ar, ona tayom banam raja ar kārigholkoak birtant hōle ol sōdoreda.





The Banam makers

Barka Tudu, Mirzapur, Birbhum
Borhan Hansda, Achaipara, Birbhum
Budi Baski, Bishnubati, Birbhum
Sanjoy Mardi, Kamarpara, Birbhum
Shyamsunder Mandi, Bhurkundabari,
Purulia
Probhat Bagdi, Kamarpara, Birbhum
Sahadeb Kisku, Ramnagar, Bibhum
Saheb Ram Tudu, Bhurkundabari, Purulia
Sokol Soren, Bhurkundabari, Purulia
Bimol Baskey, Bhurkundabari, Purulia
Sanyasi Lohar, Ashadullapur, Birbhum
Som Murmu, Bekajol, Birbhum;
Sonatan Murmu, Bekajol, Birbhum
Satya Hembrom, Borwa, Hooghly

The Banam and I – My Story

Iñák Banam - Iñák Kàhni



Barka Tudu

I have learnt making and playing the Banam by seeing and participating in the social occasions of our village. My grandfather and my uncles were also making and playing Banams in our family. But only making and playing cannot bring food to the family. Therefore I became a carpenter by profession.

I believe the Banam is a very special and sacred instrument. When we welcome or greet any guest with great respect and honor we close the right hand to make a fist and greet the guest by moving it to our forehead, and we say 'Johar' to them. I have depicted the sign 'Johar' on my Banam to indicate that the Banam is to be respected as highly as a guest.

Iñdo banam benao ar bajao dō ato reak akhṛaregeñ cet' akada. In haṛamba ar kakatako dō banam benao ar bajaoko baḍaekan tahēkana. Menkhan eken banam bajaote dō gharōñj bañ calakā, onate kaṭh mistri reak kamin' apnarkeda.

In bujhāure banam dō aḍi naprak ar sonot bajna sapap kana. Abo dō perako daramlere dōbok joharkate bon manotkoa, Onate inḍo inak banamre ti cuput' kate dōbok reak citariñ benao rakap akada.





I live in Balipara village which is one of the six Santal villages situated inside the campus of Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan. I came here from my native village on the suggestion of the villagers who, after seeing my handicrafts made of clay, grass and bamboo, said that I could become an artist if I enroll at Santiniketan. After a long struggle, I took admission at Kala-Bhavana and pursued sculpture as my specialization. My mediums of work are wood, metal and stone. I was fortunate enough to work under some great artists like Jogen Chowdhury and K.G.Subramanyan. Now my special interest of work is centred on Santals and their spirits. I am associated with a group of educated Santals, including professors of Visva-Bharati, who are doing research in this field.

Many of our Banam makers depict woman figures in their Banams because we believe women symbolize music. Some depict the abstract face of the *guru* (spiritual guide) who reminds us of our ancestors and their spiritual way of life. In my understanding, the Banam is also associated with power and that power comes from the mouth of human beings. I have depicted the hollow mouth of a skeleton at the bottom and a frog on the top of my Banam. Both these symbolize power and originality. Frogs have been surviving as long as we Santals are in this world. Maybe they are older than us. Their sounds resemble the sound of Banams, the same sound we believe was also that of our ancestors.



Iñdo Balipara atoren başında kənañ. Noa ato do Santiniketanre menak Viswa Bharti Birdagarh reak kempas bhitrire menak turui goñen atore miñ ñen kana. Iskulre pañhaok jokhen iñak hasa, mañ ar ghās reak kəmi ñelte iskulren mahasoekoko metaoadiña je





judi laṭu k̄arigol benaokem menjonkan khan Viswa Bharti, Santiniketanre bhurtikme. Aḍi aema muskil paromkate Kāla Bhavanre bhurti hoyentiñā. Nōṇḍe iñḍo sculpture reak course-re specialization reakiñ paṛhao keda. Iñḍo dhiṛi, kaṭh ar mēṛhēt reak murti benao reakiñ kāmia. Nōṇḍe iñḍo Jogen Chowdhury ar K.G. Subramanyam lekan namḍak k̄arigol latarre kāmī renak bhaḡ ar sujogiñ nām keda. Neḥali iñḍo Santal ar onkoren Boṅgako babot kāmī sanaediñkana. Iñḍo sikhit Santalkoak ḍol, okare Viswa Bharti Birdagaṛhṛen miṭ bar Professorko hō menakkōa, onko sāoteñ kāmikana.

Aema k̄arigolkoge banamre majiu-muṭṭanko goṛhon rakaṇeda, ente noabon manaoa je majiu-muṭṭhan ḍo eneḥ-sereñ-bajna renak niṣanikana. Adomko ḍo gurukoak muṭṭhanke rakaba, ente onate aboren hapram ar onkoak aṛiḇali ar legcar ṣoḍoroḇkana. Iñak biswaṣ lekate banam ḍo maṇmiak ḍare renak hō niṣanikana, ar maṇmi-ḍare ḍo uniak mocate ṣoḍoroḇka. Iñḍo banam reak latar ṣeḥ ḍo manwawak moca ar cetanre ḍo roṭeyiñ benao akadea. Noa banar ḍo manwawak ḍare ar niphuṭṭetkin ṣoḍoreda. Roṭe ḍo maṇmi leakage aḍi sedae khon jiveṭ menakkōa, paseḥ maṇmi khon hō mare. Banam reak ṣaḍe ḍo roṭe rak leakage, paseḥ aboren aḍ hapramkoak aṛan hō noṇkage tahēkana.





Budi Baski

I am a daily labourer and live with my old parents, my wife and our two children in a two- room mud house. In the evening, while my wife and mother are busy cooking food, my father plays with my children in the courtyard and tells them bed-time stories. The children fall asleep soon while the story is being told. They have played in the village all day long and have become tired. My wife carries them inside the house and puts them to sleep on the mat. And I and my parents drink rice-wine and sing with the Banam. My mother loves singing old traditional songs after she has become a bit tipsy.

The art work on my Banam shows the love between my grandfather and grandmother who are memories of my childhood. Almost every evening my grandmother used to scold my grandfather for playing the Banam. Grandfather was obsessed with Banam playing. He used to roam around attending village festivals and drinking rice-wine, and then he forgot all his family responsibilities. In the evening when he returned home drunk, he used to express all his feelings of love and concern to his wife through songs and humorous talk. My grandmother used get angry and would scold him raising her voice. We the children would gather in their courtyard to listen to their altercations. When grandfather died my grandmother was very sad and started missing him so much. To keep her husband's remembrance, she kept the Banam hanging on the wall in the sacred and interior space of their mud house. During festivals she would carry it with her while singing around in the village with other ladies, although she couldn't play it. When relatives came to her house she always talked about her husband and the Banam and how they loved each other. Now, the grandmother is also dead, but the story of their love is alive in my mind. This I have expressed in my Banam.





Inđo roj majuri kami hoř kapań, in bahu, barea gidra ar umer hoyen go-baba sao bar kandha reak hasa ořakrele tahena, ayup bela jokhan in bahu ar in gogo do daka utuyakin ar gidra kin do racare ac haramba saokin gateka ar kisa kin anjoma. Din bhor atore gate gatetekin langakoktekin japit gota. In bahu do gidra ořak bhitritey hobor aderkina ar pařiarey gitićkakina. Ado in gogo do tań hanđiye ařua ar go-baba banar hoř kin nuia. Bulnoklen khankin in baba do baname ođontaea are banama, ar in gogo do mare sereńe sereńa.

Inak banam reak karigoli do in haramba ar buđigoak dulař reak nisańi kana. Banam niyete in buđigo do roj leakage in harambaye ruhedekan tahėkana. In haramba do Banam Raja, banam niyetey bulkokkan tahėkana. Porob porbaskore banam gokkate gořa atoye dařa bařaea, gharonj reak jimedari hiřinkate hanđie nuia, sereńae are banama. Ayup ber nu bulkate ořake ruřa, lamot kathae rořa are sereńa, nonkate buđigo lařit aeak dulaře sadora. Noa nelte buđigo kajake edreka ar kajake egerea. Ar ale gidra ko do unkinak jhogra nel lařit racarele thubrakoka. In harambae goć en khan, buđhi do adi ate bhabnayena, ar kajake uihare. Haram disa dohoje lařit uniak banam do aleak hasa ořak reak bhitarey aka doho kada. Porob porbasre do banam reta bań bađae rehō ořak ořak uniak baname gok bařaea are sereńa. Ořakre peřa hořko hećlen khan banam ar haramak dulař babottegeko kuliyya. Buđhi hōe bendaoena, menkhan unkinak dulař do nithō inak uiharre jivet gea. Inak noa banam do unkinak dulař babotgeń benaoakada.





Sanjoy Mardi

I came as *Ghar Jamai* into the family where I live now. My father-in-law was a Banam player who used to play the Banam every evening and sometimes in a group during the festivals with other Banam players of the village. I used to observe and listen to my father-in-law's music every evening while having rice-wine, but I never tried to play Banam myself. When my father-in-law died, all his personal belongings, including the Banams were sent to the funeral site to be burnt along with his body – according to the tradition of our community. I, my wife and children requested them not to take the Banam for cremation, as we were so attached to its melody. But my mother-in-law insisted to burn it with the body. At the funeral, before the dead body was lit, the *jog manjhi* (the assistant priest of the village) requested the villagers to let him take the Banam in exchange of a pot of rice-wine, and he brought it home. Incidentally the *jog manjhi*'s house is situated just opposite our house. Every day in the evening when he used to play the Banam, its sound made my wife and our children sad as it reminded us of our dear deceased father. I could not bear to see the gloomy faces of our family members every evening, and I decided to make a Banam myself and to start playing too. I made a Banam and it looked beautiful and the sound was sweet like the one of my father-in-law. Everybody became happy and the joy returned to our family again.

A few years later I played the Banam at a government programme. After hearing the sound, a well-known couple from Kolkata wanted to buy the Banam to decorate their drawing room. I did not want to sell it, but because of the organizer's request I had to give it to them. My family members were sad again because of the loss of that Banam. We had





become so attached to it emotionally. Later the organizers sent me three thousand rupees for the Banam. After that I made several Banams for myself and for others, but I still miss my first Banam, because I believe my father-in-law was residing in that Banam.

The art I depicted on the Banam reflects the dancing figures of Santal women with earthen pots on their heads. This is one of the modern dance forms that Santals often play at public functions when hired by government departments, political parties and Hindu puja committees to entertain their guests and participants. The front face of the Banam is the portrait of Rabindranath Tagore. Since I did not go to school I do not know much about Tagore, but I heard that he was a great singer and poet who also loved our music.

Índō gharjāwāe lekateko āguakadiñā. Huñhariñ dō banam rajaye tahēkana. Ayup bela roj baname bajaoēkan tahēkana ar porob porbaskore dō dolre banamko bajaoē tahēkana. Tañ hanđi nū jokhan huñhariñak banamiñ añjomeť tahēkana, menkhan tis hō banam dō ban banamakat tahēkana. Huñhariñe bendaoen khan aboak āri lekate uniak sanam jinis sāote banam hō rapak lağıtko idikeda. Bahu, gidra ar indole nehōr keda je banam dō alope rapagtaea, noa renak judasi sade dō monere gađaoakan talea. Menkhan, hanhariñ doe jid keda je bañ noa dō mări sāotege rapagpe. Un jokhenge ato Jog manjhi atoren hore metaťkoa je alope rapaga, noa lağıt miť tukuc hanđiñ emoka, in emāñpe, ar ona banam doe idikeda. Bhağ lekate Jog manjhiak orať dō ale orať samañrege tahēkana. Dinam ayup bela Jog manjhi baname banam lekhangē ale gharōñjren sanam hořak mone bañijoka, onate miť ten banam benao renakiñ goťa keda. Banamiñ benao keda ar inñhō banamiñ ehōpkeda. Noa dō hoñhariñak banam lekage sojontor benaoena ar sade hō uniak lekage nūťuk tahēkana. Nonkate gharōñjren sanam hořak rařka dō ruar boťećena.



Syamsundar Mandi



I have gathered knowledge about our traditional customs and rituals naturally by attending the village festivals and by singing and dancing like many other boys of my age. I have learnt playing and making Banams from the elders in the village. In the village the youth consider me their cultural *guru*, though I have not studied much. Since the last few years, we have a traditional music team in our village. We have been performing our traditional dances and music at various events in our District and even in Kolkata. My level of confidence grew when I participated in a workshop on the *Hukw Banam*; I was the main instructor.

In my Banams I have tried to re-tell the story of Dāsāe, one of the important festivals of the Santals. I have carved a *guru* and his disciples on the forehead of the Banam. I have been inspired to make this Banam by my Guru Sonatan Mardi of our village. He is from the family of a village priest and quite old now, but he is still active and enthusiastic about transmitting his knowledge to the younger generations.

Índō ato reak porob porbas bapla biḥā íel íeltegeń harawakana. Banam benao ar bajao dō ale atoren hařamko řheniń cet akada. Ale atore aleak miřten eneć sereń dō hōle tiyar akada, onaren sordar dō inřkangeań. Ale dō Birbhum jila ar Kolkatare hō programkole uduk bařawakada. Akasřani Kolkata khon hō aleak program uřan bařawakana. ‘Daricha Foundation’ hotete hoelen ‘Huka banam Kařisal’re Ms. Ratnaboli Bose dō inře cecet mahasoe doe doholedeńa. Ina bade inak himat dō arteć ge bařhaoena.



Índō inak banam hotete Dāsāe reak řahni lai renakiń kurumuřu akada. Noa lařit dō inřen guru Sonatan Mardiye udřau akadińa. Uni dō naeke gharōńjren kanae ar netar dō ađi aře hařamena, onate aeak řiyan dō darakan piři řhen baři ořokak reak sana menak taea, jemōn aboak ařicařli dō řakhi jogaorege tahē dařeak.





Photo by Probhat Bagdi

Probhat Bagdi

I am not a Santal, but my house is situated beside a Santal village in Kamarpara. I grew up seeing Banams being played during various social occasions of the community, but that did not attract me so much then. Rather, I was more attracted to the big drums like dhol, tumdaz, tamak, the dancing rhythm and the colourful costumes and the way Santal women decorate themselves. The smaller instruments like Banam, flute, kortal and jhunko interested me much later. After studying creative art from Kala-Bhavan my perspective of seeing Santal life has changed. I realized that as the Banam is one of the oldest musical instruments of Santals, it is very much integrated with their rhythm of life. It is simple, self-made and portable, which can be played with all their songs and occasions. The sound that comes from the Banam seems to me is related to the very first sounds that Santals have heard. It is the sounds that are related to some of the birds and animals with which Santals are mostly associated, like frogs, peacocks and cows. I have also seen Santals using these animal motifs on their Banams.

The story of how the first Banam was made has also fascinated me. The first Banam was made from the tree under which the sister of five brothers was buried. Therefore I feel the Banam has a connection with a woman who has the power of a spirit, yet she sings like a common woman. In my Banam, I have depicted a Santal woman with all her qualities of physical strength and attraction and her connection with nature. I have also used my creative freedom in decorating my Banam which has given it a different look than a traditional Banam.





Photo by Probhat Bagdi

Iído Santal doñ bañ kana, menkhan ale oṛaḳ do Santal ato - Kamarpara sorrege menaka. Atokore aema porobkorege banamko bajaoa ar ona nēlkategeñ harawakana, menkhan onte aḍi āṭ do bañ orlena. Menkhan, eṭaḳ bajna ḍhol, tumdaḳ, ṭamak emantiaḱge jaṣti doñ kusiaḳkan tahēkana, ente noako ru lekhan do kuṛiko roñ biron kicrić horoḳkateko eneća. Banam, tirio, jhunka, kortal eman kaṭić sapap̣ do tayomte kusiakiñ ehōṛkeda. Kala Bhavan-re creative arts paṛhao jokhan Santalkoaḳ aṛiçali nēl reaḳ nojoria bodolentiña. Bujḥau namkedañ je banam do Santalkoaḳ mare utaṛ bajna sapap̣re miṭ ṭen kana, noa do onkoaḳ jion reaḳ dhara sāote joparaogea. Banam do Santalko algate apnarteko benaoa, noate sanam porob-porbas ar sanam raha reaḳ sereñ oḍoñ dareka. In hudisre banam reaḳ aṛaṇ do hoṛ hoṇonko añjomakaṭ sanam khon laha aṛaṇ lekage kana, noa do cēṛē-cipruṭ, jan-janwar jaise ki gāi ḍaṅgra, maraḳ, roṭe emateaḳaḳ aṛaṇ lekage saḍea. Iído Santalko noko jan-janwarkoaḳ muṭḥaṇ akoaḳ banamre benaoakaṭ in nēlakaṭ koa.

Iído Santalkoaḳ paḥil utaṛ banam reaḳ kiṣate hō aḍi maḷuñ menaña je ceṭ leka mōṛē boeha do akoren miserateṭ goćkateko topa ledea ar onḍe khonge janamlen darete banam benaolena. Onate nonkañ aḱaṇa je banam reaḳ jonaṛao do majiu sāote menaka, noare do boṅgawaḳ dare menaka ar majiu lekage sereñ oḍoñoka. Iído inaḳ banamre do Santal majiuaḳ muṭḥaniñ gaṛhao rakaṭ akada okoe do dare ar cerha geae, okoe do sirjonren nisani hō kanae. Iído kaṛigoli reaḳ phurgalteṭ beoharkate noa banam doñ benao akada, onate noa banam do nēloḳre eṭaḳ banam khon do juda gea.





Sahadeb Kisku

Besides working in the fields, I am also rehearsing Santal dance and music with the traditional music team of our village. We perform at various social occasions and government sponsored programmes. In addition, I am interested in various Santal crafts and prepare chader badani, wooden puppets, different flutes, fish nets and hunting traps. I have learnt these crafts from our elders in the village. I was inspired to make Banams by my elder brother who was a very good singer and Banam maker.

I have depicted a women figure in the Banam because I feel there is a deep relation between a women and the sound of Banams. The peace of mind that I feel in the company of women is the same peace that I feel when I am engrossed in playing Banam. Both have the power of intoxication and evoke feelings of transcendence.

Casa-basa kami chada indo ale atoren enec serei dol saote ho menai gea. Ale do porob-porbas ar sarkari programkore aleak enec serei le uduk baraea. Indo Cador badani, kath reak putul, hako jhali ar godo pasi emateak benao hon badaegea. Noako do indo atoren mare horoko theni ce akada. In banam benao renak udgauna do in dada then khoni nam akada, uni do adi bhage gaenaha saote banam karigol ho kanae.

Indo inak banamre kurak muthani benao akada, cedak je nonkan aikaua banma banam reak sade ar ayo hor talare do gahir sagai menaka. Apnar juri saote suluk nirai reak okte leakage banam bajaore ho suluk nirai menaka. Banarrege adi judasi.





Saheb Ram Tudu

I have a strong inclination of working with wood, bamboo, mud and other natural materials from early childhood. I grew up with my father. Seeing him make all the household materials himself probably influenced my interest. Starting from the cot to the bullock cart, from the thatched roof to multiple musical instruments and hunting materials, my father never hired craftsmen to manufacture such works. Without compromising with my studies, I emulated my father's interests. I studied sculpture at Banaras Hindu University and animation from the National Institute of Design, Allahabad. Presently, though I stay in Kolkata for a job, my interest in working on traditional items remains alive in my heart.

I had heard many stories about the Banam in my childhood including the one about the creation of the Banam. I remember my uncle and aunt quarrelling because of playing Banam in the evening. My aunt believed that the Banam my uncle played had a spirit dwelling in it; she heard the Banam playing by itself at night. To satisfy the wishes of my aunt, my uncle used to keep the Banam hanging in the backyard of their house at night.

My Banam I consider a lady or flower, and over it I have depicted the Guloj tree. The myth says that it is the plant that grew on the burial site of the sister who the five brothers killed to eat her flesh. The figure of the elephant depicts the supreme power that emerges from the mystery of divine emptiness inside the "belly" of the Banam which is covered by goat-skin. I feel that it is from this divine emptiness that the strength of Santal culture and the beauty of life and music evolve.





Inđo kaṭić khonge kaṭh, mať, hasa ar dhirire goṛhon reak kāmire ađi mone lagaokkantiń tahena. Kaṭić khonge inđo in baba oṛak lađiť sapapko benaoiń nolakadea. Uni do parkom, sađar, mađi, gando emanteake benaoeť tahēkana ar sađim hōe dađeť tahēkana. Ar sereń bajna reak sapap ar sendra reak sapap hōe benaoeť tahēkana. In baba do noako kami lađiť do eťak hoṛ bhorsa do bae tahenkan tahena. Olok paṛhao seṛae tuluć inđo uniak horeń pańjakeda. Banaras Hindu University khon sculpture ar National Institute of Design, Allahabad khon animation reak course in purau keda. Nitok do Kolkatareń cakria, menkhan mone do aboak arićali reak sapap sirjaurege menakťina.

Inđo kaṭić khonge banam babotte aema kisań ańjom aguakada. Banam niyete in marańba ar marańgo takinkin jhograkkan tahēkana. In marańgoye menet tahēkana je banamre do bońga menaea, ente marańbawak banam ninda acťege bajaokkan tahēkana, undin khon marańba do aeak banam oṛak kuđam bađe sećreye akakaka.

Inđo inak banamre kuṛikoak muṭhaniń rakap akada, ente kisa lekate boeha koṛako akoren miserako goćledea ar jelko jomkeť taea. Menkhan, kaṭić boeha do bae jom leda are topa kada, onde khonge dare harayente ona khon pahil utar banam benaolena. Inak banam reak latar hĩsre do haťiak muṭhaniń benao akada, oka do sirjon reak dařeje sođoreda. Inđo inak banam merom hartateń dađ akada. Inak hudisre inak banam do Santal arićali reak daře ar Santal jion reak raşkaye abhran akada.





Sokol Soren

I lost my parents in my childhood. But since I grew up in a joint family the love and care my parents could not give me were in many ways compensated by my grandparents and other members of the family. I have never been to school and thus I had enough time in my childhood and adolescence to wander around our villages and experience the various cultural traditions of our Santal life. I learnt playing various musical instruments and dances along with our village cultural group. My interest in making Banams developed recently when I attended a workshop on the Hukw Banam in our village.

Inđo kaṭićregen̄ ṭaṛena, onate inđo in̄ haṛamba ar buḍigo ṭakinkin harawakadiña. Iskul dō tis hō bañ calaolente atoregen̄ dāṛabaṛaea ar Santalkoak̄ aṛical̄i leglegcar n̄lten̄ haraburuyena. Inđo atorenko sāotege enec̄ sereñ bajnako doñ cet̄keda. 'Daricha Foundation' ren Ms. Ratnaboli Bose doholeť 'Huka Banam Kamisal' hotete banam benao reak̄ sana ar ṛaskā dō arhō udgauentiña. Aboren hapramkoak̄ aṛical̄i sap̄ dohoe laḡit̄ inđo in̄ak̄ banamiñ benao akada.





Bimol Baskey

I had no experience of Banam making until I attended a workshop on making of a *Hukw Banam* organized by ‘Daricha Foundation’ in collaboration with the *Anthropological Survey of India* in 2015 in our village. It was the first time that I made a *Hukw Banam* and surprisingly it came out very well and the villagers appreciated my Banam.

I did not like this culture of drinking and singing in my childhood. At school we were told that music does not help school education. I studied up to class XII, and afterwards have started a tailoring shop in my village. Since 2010, I have also written some books in *Ol-chiki* script and have a small Santali bookstall which I carry to various village fairs and festivals to sell books.

In my Banam I have depicted the figure of some animals mentioned in our Santal creation myth: the *lëndet* (earthworm), *māgaṛ* (crocodile), and *içak hako* (prawn), I believe ever since we were born in this world the sound of Banam also came along with us and also do the creatures mentioned in our myth.

2015 salre ‘Daricha Foundation’-reñ Ms. Ratnaboli Bose do Anthropological Survey of India goroṭe ale atore ‘Hukw Banam’ reak kāmisaḷe (workshop) doḥoleḍa, onage banam benao reak iñak pahil utar anaṭkar do taḥēkana. Unre iñak benaoak banam do atoren hoṛ aḍi āṭko kusiada, unkhonge iñdo banam benaoreñ jhūkena.

In seḥ khon Museum of Santal Culture, Bishnubati aḍi aema sarhaoiñ calae kana je nui do banam kāmisaḷ hoṭete Santal aṛicaḷi ar eneḥ sereñ rakhi jogao laḡit aḍi napṛake kurumuṭu akaṭa.

Iñdo iñak banamre dharti sirjonre taḥēkanko jiv jiāli jeḷeka, lëndet, boar ar iḥak hakoak muṭḥaniñ goṛhon rakaṭ akaṭa.





Sanyasi Lohar

I am from a blacksmith family and was born and brought up in a Santal village. The craftsman communities like the weavers (tanti), potters (kumor), cobblers (muchhi), bamboo craftsmen (mahle), rice-wine brewers (sundi) and blacksmiths (kamar) are the traditional co-inhabitants of the Santals who normally build their houses at the edge of the village. Our family has lived in the Santal village Ashadullapur since generations serving many neighboring villages by making iron tools for agricultural work, hunting, musical and household materials like sickles, spades, ploughs, arrows, cart wheels, door bolts.

Being a trained artist from Kala-Bhavan, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, and having witnessed the Banam making and playing since birth, I have realized that Banam has always played a big role in shaping the Santal mentality. I have seen the Banams being held like babies by its players while playing it. They hold the Banam close to their bodies and take utmost care while handling it. I have also witnessed the negative effects of a Banam on family life. Sometimes a husband is so engrossed with his Banam that he even abandons his wife and children and leaves home to live with other women who appreciate his Banam music. Among the Santals no other musical instrument is handled as emotionally as the Banam. I tried to recreate that emotional bonding between Banam and the human soul.



Índó kamar kãṇañ ar Santal atoreñ haraoakana. Kamar, malhe, kuñkãl, sunḍi, tãti, mucu eman jat ðo Santal atore miť nakhareko tahena. Ale gharõñj ðo Santal ato - Ashadullapurre sedae khõnge menaklea. Ale ðo mẽrhẽť reak saj-sapaṇle benaoa, jeleka kuḍi, ṭamni, hal, aṇari, datrom, katu, emanteak.





Viswa Bharti reak Kāla Bhavanren paṭḥuaṇ tahēkante ar kaṭiḥ khonge banam benao ar bajaoiṇ nēlakaṭ kote noa doṇ bujtiok akada je banam do Santalkoak jion reak aḍi mohotanak sapaṭ kana. Nēl akaṭ koaṇ banam do banam jokhan gidra lekako hoborkaka. Banam do apnar gidra leka aḍi jotonteko doḥoea. Menkhan, Santal gharōṇjore banam reak bariḥ orson hōṇ nēl barawakada. Adom adom banam raja do banam khatirte gidra ar era bagikate eṭak ayo sāoko āgir barawakana. Banam do Santalko laḡit sanam sapaṭ modre sanam khon jiyaligea. Onate iṇdo iṇak banamre maṇmi jiyali reak goṛhon rakaṭ reakiṇ kurumutu akada.





Som Murmu

I grew up seeing my father making bullock carts, ploughs and bamboo cots under the tree in the backyard of our house. He also used to make roof ridges of wood or bamboo and cover them with tin and bamboo for other villagers in exchange of rice-wine, food grain and sometimes money. After my father's death, I took up his job besides the agricultural work. And that is how I was introduced to wood work and making of musical instruments like the Banam and flutes.

I took up Banam making seriously when I met the legendary Banam maker and player Bajjar Hembrom of our neighboring village, Pathalghata. For many years we have been experimenting with Banams and other Santal musical instruments and songs in our villages. A few years ago *Kristi*, an NGO working on promoting tribal art and culture, took my Banams and other manual work like *chader badani*, wooden dolls, materials with bamboo and grass to sell them in the fairs like Poushmela, Maghmela, Khoyai Hat and other fairs in and around Santiniketan. It is the first time that I came to know that the Banam has a monetary value and non-Santals also buy them. Now I make Banams only on request but I play it regularly during our festivals – in Dāsāe, *Sorhae*, *Baha* and during our marriage festivals. Playing Banams while having rice-wine in our courtyard in the evening gives me physical relaxation and a sense of joy and belonging with our community.

The sculpture that I have depicted on my Banam tells about the struggle and joy of an old widow. She takes care of her two children and is also responsible for her grand-children whose parents have separated. Their father has gone far away with another woman to work in a rice mill.





Inđo in baba barge nakhare sagar, nahel ar mať kuťha parkom benao nel neltegeri harawakana. In baba do etak horokoak sarim hoe dapkatakoka tahēkana ar ona bodolte tukuc hāndi ar horoko emaoaekan tahēkana ar oka oka do paesa hō. In baba bendaoen tayom cas bas sāote uniak noa kami hōn sēra idikeda. Nonkate inđo kaťh reak kamirei bōloyena, ar tirio, banam emanteak benaoiñ dhurāena.

Menkhan, Pathalghataren Banam Raja ar gakhur banam karigol, Bajjar Hembrom sao napamkatege banam benao reak kami don sēra akada. Aliñ do aema bochor dhābić ale atorege nana rokom reak banam ar bajna sapapliñ benaoa ar serei hōliñ sirjauet tahēkana. Kuchek bochor laha, Kristi nutuman mit ten NGO ināk benaoak banam, cador badani, kaťh reak putul, mať ar ghāste benaoakat sapapko kerei idikate Santiniketan reak Pos mela, Magh mela, Khowai mela emanteakre akhriñko ehōpkeda. Tobe anećiñ bujkeda je banam reak hō dam menaka, hor hopon chađakate deko hōko hatao gea. Netar do eken order hataokatege banam don benaoeda. Menkhan, aboak porob jeleka Dāsāe, Sohrae, Baha ar bapla bihare don banam gea. Racare hāndi nu jokhan banam banamte hōmō jirau ar jivire raskani atkara ar sāota sao joporao tañen lekañ aikāua.

Inđo ināk banamre mit ten rāndi majiu ar acren gorom gidraokoak muťhaniñ benaoakada, onko gidrañen go-baba dokin chađa chađi akana. Cidra ac baba do etak ayo sao horo milre kami lagit sañgiñ dišame calao pharakena, un khon gidraoko do ac buđigoye harakoa.





Sonatan Murmu

I work as a daily labourer in a brick kiln situated 3 km away from our village, near the Kopai river. I work from 5 o'clock in the morning till 12 noon. My wife does all the household work like cleaning, cooking, looking after the children and the domestic animals.

My father was a *Ghar Jamai* – that is, he stayed with my mother's family. I grew up looking after our goats, pigs, cows and working in the fields and also seeing my father and maternal grandfather drinking rice-wine and playing the Banam in our house.

I started making Banams after my father's death because my parents and even my wife did not want that I make Banams. They believe they are related with *Bongas* (spirits). I was emotionally very close to my grandfather. As a child I remember that my grandfather always used to carry me on his back while going out to the villages for dancing and playing Banam.

The sculptural art that I have depicted in the Banam is dedicated to the fond remembrance of my grandfather.

Índō ale ato khon 3 km sãgiñ Kopai gaḍa aṛere miṭṭen iṭa bhaṭare majuriñ kāmia. Índō setak 5 baje khon 12 baje tikin dhaḍiñ kāmia. Íñ bahu dō isin basan ar oṛak reake kāmia ar gidṛa ar jan janwarkoe nēlkoa.

Íñ baba dō ghar-jāwāe hoṛe tahēkana, onate ale dō in gogoak oṛakregele tahēna. Índō cas kāmia ar gai ḍaṅgra, sim sukri, merom bhiḍi ṣulteñ harawakana. Unjokhen, ale oṛakre in baba ar mamaba ṭakin ṭukuḥ haṇḍi nū ar banam bajaiñ nēleṭkin tahēna.

Íñ babae beṇḍaoen khan in dō banam benaiñ ehoṭkeda, menkhan in bahu dō noa menkatey manayediñ tahēkana je noare dō boṅako tahēna. Índō in goṛomba sã ḍi heṛa ghesayin tahēkana. Uni dō eṭak atote banam laṭiṭ calaok khane ghōṛa iditorayediñ tahēkanae. Onate ināk banamre dō uniak muṭhaṅgeñ benao rakap akada.





Satya Hembrom

I was working as a daily labourer in the fields. I had a special interest in art since my school days. My teachers also appreciated my art work. But I could not study much due to various problems. I used to help the students doing their project work, in turn receiving Rs.10/- per drawing. Later my sister Lakhimoni Hembrom helped me to study art at Kala-Bhavan of Visva-Bharati University taking sculpture as my specialization. I could not complete my course here too due to my personal reasons. Now I work again in the fields to make a living. Sometimes I work as a freelance artisan on murals and with stones which is my special interest.

I am familiar with Banams since childhood. I saw my grandfather and the elders of our village playing different types of Banams but I never tried playing them myself. Nowadays Banams are no longer used in our village. The younger generation especially finds more interest in modern instruments like the violin, the guitar and the mandolin. However, the old generation still finds joy in playing Banams in many villages. In my Banam I have tried to experiment with the sound by making various curves.

Índō roj majuri lekate khetkoreñ kãmi baṛaea. Iskulre paṛhaok okte khonge citãrko benaore aḍi mone tahẽkantiñã. Aleren mahasoeko hõ inãk kãmiko kusiakkan tahẽkana. Menkhan aema muskilak iãte ol-paṛhao dõ baḡikak hoyentiñã. Adõ paṭhuako akoak project kãmire goṛoiñ ehõpkeda, noa kãmire miṭten citãr laḡit 10/- ṭakako emãñkan tahẽkana. Tayomte in didi Lakhimani Hembromak goṛote Viswa Bharti reak Kala Bhavanreñ bhurtiyena. Menkhan onde hõ muskilak karonte inãk sculpture course bañ purau daṛeada. Inã bade arhõ khetre kãmiiñ ehõpkeda ar soṅgete hasa ar dhiri reak kãmi hõñ sapkeda.



Banam dõ inđo kaṭic khongeñ nel aḡuida. In haṛamba ar atoren haṛamko banam baṛaet tahẽkana, menkhan inđo tis hõ bañ banam legawakat tahẽkana. Netar banam dõ at idikkana, nahak jugren koṛa kuṛi dõ banam chaḍakate violin, mandolin, guitar emangeko kusiakkana. Menkhan, enhõ mare hoṛ doko rakhi jogao akat gea. Inđo banam rakhi jogao kurumuṭurege menãña.





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Banams play an important role in the Santal cultural heritage. However, the making and use of the Banam is declining among Santals and is threatened by extinction. The old villagers who have imbibed our traditional knowledge and normally make and play the Banams are unable to transmit their skills and knowledge to the young generations for different reasons.

Against this background, the Ghosaldanga Bishnubati Adibasi Trust organized a Workshop on Banam Making in the campus of the Museum of Santal Culture at Bishnubati. Traditional Banam makers and the young generation of Santals who have an inclination towards Banam making have been invited to make the Banams during a three-month workshop (September to November 2018). In this book you can find their experiences.

